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# PALEONTOLOGY LAW



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Paleontological Resources  
Preservation under the Omnibus  
Public Land Management Act  
of 2009

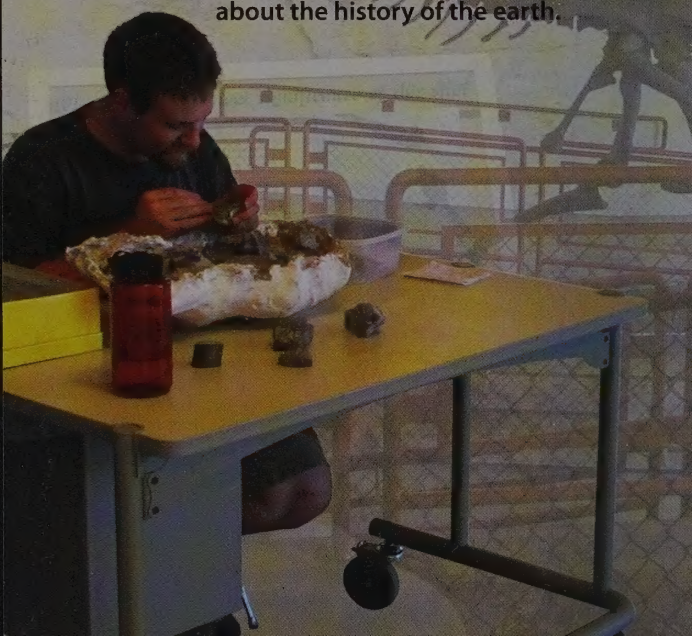


# PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION

By passing the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, which includes the Paleontological Resources Preservation subtitle, Congress has recognized the value of paleontological resources on public lands as a natural and irreplaceable part of America's heritage. Within the act, Title VI, Subtitle D, Paleontological Resources Preservation (16 U.S.C. 470aaa) provides authority to protect paleontological resources on federal lands.

## WHAT IS A PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE?

The act defines a paleontological resource as any fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in or on the earth's crust, that are of paleontological interest and that provide information about the history of the earth.





# CURATION OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The act requires that paleontological resources collected under a permit remain United States property and must be preserved for the public in an approved repository, to be made available for scientific research and public education.

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF LOCALITY DATA

In order to protect the resource from theft and vandalism, the act requires that the nature and location of paleontological resources on public lands be kept confidential.

## PROHIBITED ACTS AND PENALTIES

Theft and vandalism of publicly owned paleontological resources results in a loss to all of the people of the United States. Civil penalties include fines based on the value of the paleontological resource and damage to the fossil as well as to the land. Criminal penalties include fines or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both.

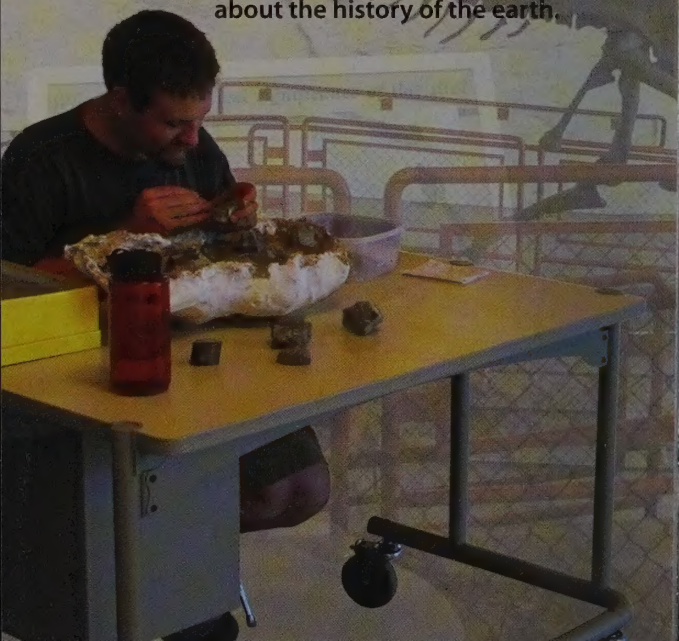


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## PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Programs to increase public awareness about the significance of paleontological resources are required under the act. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will establish opportunities and update existing programs to offer more information about paleontological resources on public lands.

## MANAGEMENT OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Under the act, paleontological resources must be managed and protected on public land using scientific principles and expertise. Appropriate plans must be developed for inventory, monitoring, and the scientific and educational use of paleontological resources. In the BLM, management of these resources will emphasize interagency coordination and collaborative efforts with partners, the scientific community, and the general public.

## DO I NEED A PERMIT TO COLLECT PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES?

A paleontological resource use permit is required to collect paleontological resources of scientific interest. Collections made under a paleontological resource use permit remain the property of the United States and will be preserved for the public in an approved repository, to be made available for scientific research and public education.

## WHAT ABOUT HOBBY COLLECTING?

Casual collecting of common invertebrate and plant fossils will continue to be allowed without a permit for noncommercial personal use. Check with a local BLM office for specific areas that are identified for hobby collecting.





The BLM is currently developing regulations to implement the Paleontological Resources Preservation subtitle under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, 16 U.S.C. 470aaa.

The full text of the act is available at:

[www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations.html)

For more information, visit [www.blm.gov/heritage](http://www.blm.gov/heritage)

